



THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

**STATEMENT BY LT. GEN (Rtd). MOSES ALI,
RT. HON. FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER
FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND REFUGEES OF
THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**

AT

THE WORLD CONFERENCE ON DISASTER REDUCTION

KOBE, HYOGO, JAPAN

18-22 JANUARY 2005

Mr. Chairman
Distinguished Delegates
Ladies and Gentlemen

First, I congratulate you and other members of your bureau upon your election. Secondly, I extend my sincere gratitude to the Government of Japan, for hosting this very important conference and the hospitality accorded to my delegation. The Uganda delegation would like to join you and all participants to this conference in extending our deepest sympathies and condolences to the victims of the recent tsunami disaster and their families and to the Governments and people of those Countries who suffered extensive damages from the tsunami disaster. We wish the survivors quick recovery and we commend the international community for the prompt and generous support and contribution to the relief and recovery needs of the affected countries.

Mr. Chairman

Uganda lies between the two arms of the East African Rift Valley System making it one of the most seismically active countries in Africa. The 1966 earthquake in the Western parts of the Country caused death to 157 people, injured 1,320 people, destroyed and caused damage to about 67,000 houses. Another earthquake occurred in the same region in 1994 causing damage and destruction to property worth 6 billion Uganda shillings (3 Million Dollars) and killed 8 people.

Mr Chairman

Uganda is also prone to a number of other natural and human induced disasters that include; drought, floods, landslides, epidemics, pests, wild fires, refugee influxes, terrorism, transport accidents and internal displacement of persons. The Government of Uganda has an approved national policy for internally displaced persons, and the refugee bill is before parliament. The Government is currently formulating a National Disaster Preparedness Policy which will provide guidelines for preparedness and management of disasters through multi-sectoral, multi-disciplinary arrangements incorporating government sectoral ministries, humanitarian and development agencies and other stakeholders at all levels of the disaster cycle.

Uganda is also actively participating in regional initiatives for disaster reduction under the auspices of The East African Community, The Inter-Governmental Authority on Development (IGAD) and the GOLDEN SPEAR initiative supported

by the United States of America. The challenges faced in implementing disaster risk reduction policies include inadequate resources, equipment and skills.

Mr. Chairman

Uganda commends the United Nations International Strategy for Disaster Reduction (UN/ISDR) for the initiative to establish National Platforms for Disaster Reduction in all African and Other Developing Countries. We request the donor community to support the UN/ISDR initiative especially in assisting developing countries establish effective institutions, policies and legislative frameworks for disaster reduction.

In 2002, Uganda established its National Platform for Disaster Reduction with support from UN-ISDR Africa Office. The Platform has mainstreamed disaster risk reduction issues into the Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP). This plan constitutes Uganda's Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) that guides formulation of Government Policy and implementation of programmes through sector wide approaches to planning, aimed at achieving the millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

Mr. Chairman

Uganda recognizes that natural disasters respect no international borders. Uganda therefore urges industrialized countries to support developing countries establish regional cooperation and coordination mechanism for disaster reduction to effectively address impacts of natural disasters.

Mr Chairman

The need to build strong regional partnerships for surveillance, early warning, preparedness and response cannot be over emphasized. Regional disaster reduction institutions will boost the limited capacities of individual developing countries whose vulnerability to natural disasters are on the increase.

Mr Chairman

Uganda appeals to the international community to enhance support in form of capacity building, financial and technical assistance to the Africa region. Given the high dependency by many African countries on international aid, we urge the international donors to include disaster risk reduction strategies as major components in their development and humanitarian assistance programs to Africa.

Mr. Chairman,

While planning to reduce natural disasters, diseases epidemics, hazardous waste, conflicts, terrorism and transport accidents should not be overlooked. These human induced disasters increase vulnerability to natural disasters, and they should therefore be addressed as part of the strategic directions for Disaster Reduction.

Mr. Chairman,

The number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) the world over estimated at about 25 million is about five times that of refugees. Many of the IDPs are victims of natural disasters. Whereas it is the primary responsibility of the responsible country to care for its IDPs, most of the IDPs are found in poor countries already overwhelmed by many disasters. Uganda has over several years faced a challenge of meeting the needs of well over 1,600,000 IDPs. The food requirement of this number of IDPs for one year is well over US\$ 200 million, yet the IDPs also need medical care, water, education etc. Uganda therefore appeals to the United Nations to consider establishing an Institution similar to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to support countries faced with IDP crises. Expanding the mandate of UNHCR to include support to IDPs could be considered as an alternative.

Mr. Chairman,

I would like on behalf of my Government to thank the International donor Agencies who have continued to generously support The Government of Uganda in meeting the needs of disaster victims.

Mr. Chairman,
Distinguished Delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, Uganda would like to emphasise the need to strengthen capacities of countries in particular the developing countries in responding to natural disasters and the need to strengthen international and regional cooperation and coordination in disaster reduction through enhanced institutional arrangements.

I thank you for your attention.

Lt. Gen. (Rtd) Moses Ali
1ST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR DISASTER
PREPAREDNESS AND REFUGEES. **THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA**